

ORLANDO, FLA.
SENTINEL

MORNING 87,137
SUNDAY 114,134

25X1

MAR 19

CIA-RDP75-00149R000700500023-8

Justice Sought For Women Whose Husbands Killed

Mercenary Warns Govt: Admit Flight

By AL WOOD
Sentinel Staff

MIAMI — Soldier of fortune Frank Fiorini is coming on strong like a knight in shining armor to obtain justice for the widows of two fellow Castro-fighters who died 15 months ago in Cuba.

His sword and lance: The names of the individuals and federal agencies who financed and condoned the Dec. 15, 1961 flight of pilots Bob Thompson, of W. Melbourne and Bob Swanner, of Miami which claimed the lives of both in a Matanzas, Province sugar cane field.

Fiorini yesterday served warning on the U. S. Govt to give Mrs. Swanner in Indianola, Miss. and Mrs. Thompson in Presque Isle, Maine, the same consideration shown families of four Alabama pilots killed in the Bay of Pigs fiasco April 17, 1961.

He wants the Govt to admit that the two are officially dead, making their widows and children eligible for social security benefits, and to further provide financial aid to them.

SWANNER AND Thompson, in Fiorini's frame of reference, are as much as he commended for their heroic pamphlet drop as were the Bay of Pigs pilots.

"The only differences is that Swanner and Thompson did not sign contracts with the Central Intelligence Agency nor act as instructors for anti-Fidel Cubans," Fiorini maintains.

"Swanner and Thompson were fighting Communists, too, and it is unfortunate that they should be looked down upon by federal agencies as mere soldiers of fortune and

Fiorini was possibly the last man to see the pair alive, on Norman's Cay in the Bahamas. He had flown with them in the cockpit of a chartered Melbourne Airways Piper Apache from Ft. Lauderdale to W. Palm Beach to Andros Island to the Cay.

A husky adventurer, Fiorini is a six-footer, weighing about 200 pounds. At 17 he was the youngest member of Darby's Rangers in World War II; in Korea he won the Distinguished Service Medal as a U. S. Marine Corps pilot; in Indo-China he fought as a mercenary beside French Foreign Legionnaires.

IN CUBA Fiorini flew for rebel leader Fidel Castro until the bearded leader showed himself a red follower of the Russian Bear. Today Castro has few enemies as bitter against him and his ambitions as Frank Fiorini.

His credo: Work to rid the world of tyrants like Fidel.

Fiorini claims he has not profited from his anti-Communist exploits which were condoned by the CIA, and now expects to be hounded for threatening to release embarrassing information about Govt sanctions.

"I don't want those women to suffer," he says in his defense.

What can Fiorini say? Speculation is that he can name the mysterious man who talked with Thompson at W. Palm Beach on the day of the fatal flight.

TO WHOM will he tell his story? Any member of Congress who offers to do something for Mrs. Swanner and Mrs. Thompson. To date Sen. George Smathers of Florida and Robert Byrd of W. Virginia and Rep. Clifford McIntire of Maine have taken an interest.

Fiorini will not now say if he is working for the CIA nor will he name names. Not yet.

He maintains that the CIA and the U.S. Border Patrol gave the green light to the Thompson mission, that he knows exactly who was responsible and that this person is

Fiorini says that all top Govt agents involved have now been reassigned. And finally he swears that the pamphlets dropped from the Apache were paid for by the U.S. Govt.

MORI/CDE